

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: Code of Honor

Senate Bill (SB) 214, Section 17.5 of the 2005 Nevada Legislative session directs the Nevada Department of Education to “prescribe by regulation a written policy that establishes a code of honor for pupils relating to cheating on examinations and course work.” The policy was required to “be developed in consultation with the boards of trustees of school districts, the governing bodies of charter schools, educational personnel employed by school districts and charter schools, and local associations and organizations of parents whose children are enrolled in public schools throughout” Nevada. In addition, “copies of the Code of Honor must be available for inspection” at each public and charter school and, as part of SB 214, Section 17 (m), it must be distributed at the beginning of each school year with the newly developed Educational Involvement Accord.

On January 12, 2006, a Code of Honor Work Group, comprised of the identified members, was assembled. The goals of this work group were to develop a policy by identifying the critical components of the Code of Honor (Code) and by defining cheating in a clear and concise way. Work Group members utilized provided materials, such as cheating policies at Nevada high schools, as well as additional resources to guide their work. The development of the Code as well as the accompanying guidance relied heavily on the valued input of all the work group members. After completing the first draft of the Code, all work group members had another opportunity to provide more feedback through e-mail correspondence and a January 25, 2006, conference call to discuss the developed and edited policy.

Throughout this guidance document, you will find information on the newly developed Code as well as potential resources that may prove useful in the implementation of the policy.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: Code of Honor

1. Who must use the Code of Honor policy prescribed by Nevada Department of Education (NDE)?

- . All public schools, including charter schools.

2. What is in the Code of Honor?

- . The policy is required to include “a definition of cheating that clearly and concisely informs pupils which acts constitute cheating.” In addition, desired student behavior is described as well as the roles of all educational partners – staff, students, and parents.

3. Are there any specified requirements for distributing the Code of Honor?

- . Yes, Senate Bill (SB) 214, Section 17 (m) requires the Code of Honor to accompany the Educational Involvement Accord when it is distributed at the beginning of each school year.

4. Are there any other requirements relative to the Code of Honor that schools and/or districts must follow?

- . Yes, “copies of the Code of Honor must be made available for inspection at each public school located within a school district, including, without limitation, each charter school, in an area on the grounds of the school that is open to the public.” Since it is legislatively required to have a copy available “on the grounds,” it would be important to designate a specific area, such as a public bulletin board in the hallway of the school, to satisfy this requirement. Additionally, a school and/or district may want to communicate this policy with the public in a number of other ways:
 - Post the Code of Honor on the district and/or school website
 - Include the Code of Honor in the student handbook or folder

5. Are the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) regulations relative to cheating and test security still in effect?

- . Yes, Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 389.616 still governs the policies and practices for administering and taking the HSPE. For more information and guidance on the HSPE regulations, go to the Nevada Department of Education website and click on Assessment. Once on the Assessment page, click on NPEP Resources to access the Guidelines for the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program (NPEP).

6. Do ALL (K-12) students receive this Code of Honor?

- . Yes, since it must be distributed with the Educational Involvement Accord, all students, grades kindergarten through 12th, will receive this policy. Obviously, there are great differences in ability, experience, and knowledge between the ages of 5 years and 18 years. Consequently, it is suggested that schools approach the Code of Honor with consideration for the age and experience of the students. For example, one way a school or district may want to approach introducing this

policy to the parents of young children would be to include an introductory letter explaining its purpose and how it relates to a child given his/her age. Attached in Appendix A is a sample letter that may be used to introduce the Code of Honor policy to the parents of younger children.

7. Are there any resources that teachers or parents can access that help teach and guide children in this area?

- . Yes, attached in Appendix B is a list of websites and resources that teachers and parents may find useful in teaching children about honesty and integrity as well as identifying the characteristics of cheating and plagiarism. These sources have not been screened, reviewed, or endorsed by the Nevada Department of Education; however, other educators, including the Code of Honor work group, have found these resources to be helpful.

8. Are the Code of Honor and the Educational Involvement Accord available electronically?

- . Yes, they can be found on the Nevada Department of Education website (www.doe.nv.gov).

APPENDIX A: Sample Introductory Letter

Dear Parents:

During the 2005 Nevada Legislative session, Senate Bill 214, Section 17.5 directed the Nevada Department of Education to write a “Code of Honor” policy that defines cheating on examinations and coursework. This policy is required to be distributed to all Nevada public school students in order to make students and families aware of Nevada’s policy regarding academic honesty and integrity.

As you know, all children grow and learn at different rates and it is important to keep this in mind when approaching the concepts of cheating and dishonesty with young children. It is during the early childhood years (birth – eight years old) that children begin to distinguish the difference between right and wrong, and fact from fantasy. So, do not be alarmed if your child has what you might consider a rather inconsistent understanding of cheating and dishonesty. This is typical and normal for young children; however, it is not too early to introduce the concept of honesty.

With the addition of this new Code of Honor policy, it is important to communicate with our parents regarding expectations for our students. Likewise, it is equally important to keep in mind age-appropriate expectations relating to the Code of Honor. As educators and parents we will work together to introduce and promote good work habits in all of our students, including our youngest. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child’s teacher or any of our staff here at this school.

Sincerely,

Elementary School Principal

APPENDIX B: Resources

<http://elearning.homestead.com/plagiarism.html>

http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin375.shtml

<http://www.nutsandboltsguide.com/plagiarism.html>

<http://www.partnershipforlearning.org/article.asp?ArticleID=2128>

<http://www.collegeboard.com/article/0,3868,2-10-0-10314,00.html>

<http://www.pta.org>, select the “Parent Resources” button, and then select “Student Achievement” to find “Character Counts”